

PARENT & CARER GUIDE

Nannies, Babysitters & Childcare at Home

A practical guide to checking and employing someone to care for your children in your home.

Inviting someone into your home to look after your children is a big decision. Nannies and babysitters are often personal employees, which means you are hiring them directly. This guide explains what DBS checks are possible, how to view a certificate and what else to think about.

They can get a DBS check. You can ask to see it.

Since 21 January 2026, eligible self-employed workers can apply for their own Enhanced DBS check through a DBS Umbrella Body.

Can a nanny or babysitter get a DBS check?

Since 21 January 2026, eligible personal employees and self-employed workers can apply for an Enhanced DBS check. Depending on the role, this may include a Children's Barred List check.

Eligibility depends on the role. How often they care for your children, and what the work involves, can make a difference. An occasional evening babysitter may not qualify in the same way as a regular nanny. The person can check using the DBS eligibility tool at gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check.

You cannot apply for a check on their behalf. They apply themselves through a DBS Umbrella Body, such as self-employed-dbs.co.uk. The certificate belongs to them, but you can ask to see it.

Ofsted registration is separate

Registered childminders and nurseries are regulated by Ofsted. Some nannies also choose to join the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register. This is a separate process from the individual DBS route in this guide.

If your nanny says they are Ofsted registered, ask to see their registration certificate. Either way, you can still ask to see their DBS certificate.

Care in your home

- Meet in person first, then arrange a paid trial session while you are at home.
- Write down house rules, routines, allergies and emergency contacts.
- Agree rules on visitors, outings, car travel and screen time.
- Agree how photos of your children may be taken and shared.
- Ask about paediatric first aid training.
- Come home unannounced now and then, and keep in touch during the day.
- Talk to your children about their day and listen to what they say.

If you are their employer

If you employ a nanny directly, you usually take on employer responsibilities. Check the current rules on GOV.UK before they start.

- Give them a written contract setting out hours, pay, duties and notice.
- Check they have the right to work in the UK.
- Pay at least the National Minimum Wage.
- You may need to register as an employer with HMRC and run payroll.
- You may need to enrol them in a workplace pension.
- Consider employer's liability insurance for staff in your home.

How to check their DBS certificate

For caring for under-18s, the certificate should cover the child workforce. If the role is eligible, it may also include a Children's Barred List check.

If they subscribe to the DBS Update Service, you can do a free status check at gov.uk/dbs-update-service with their permission. You need their certificate number, surname as on the certificate and date of birth. GOV.UK suggests entering "private employer" as the organisation name. If new information exists, ask them to apply for a new check.

If a certificate shows the person is on the Children's Barred List, they must not do this work. Do not employ them.

- ☐ See the original paper certificate. Copies or photos are not acceptable.
- ☐ Check the name and details match their government photo ID.
- ☐ Look at the issue date.
- ☐ Check it covers the child workforce.
- ☐ See whether a Children's Barred List check was included.
- ☐ Ask if they subscribe to the DBS Update Service.
- ☐ Do not photocopy, share or keep the certificate information longer than needed.

Where to get help

- In an emergency, call the police on 999.
- Worried about a child? Call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000.
- If you know a barred person is caring for children, report it to the police.
- Find an Umbrella Body: gov.uk/find-dbs-umbrella-body
- Full guidance: gov.uk/guidance/private-individuals-employing-self-employed-workers-or-personal-employees

Questions to ask

1. Do you have an Enhanced DBS certificate, and may I see the original?
2. Does it cover the child workforce and include a Children's Barred List check?
3. Are you signed up to the DBS Update Service?
4. Are you on the Ofsted Childcare Register, and can I see your registration?
5. Can you give me references from families you have worked for recently?
6. Do you have paediatric first aid training?
7. How would you handle an emergency or a child who is unwell?

Warning signs

- Refuses to show the original certificate, or only offers a photo or copy.
- Names or details on the certificate do not match their photo ID.
- Cannot give references, or references are hard to reach.
- Gaps in work history they will not explain.
- Asks your children to keep secrets from you.
- Your children seem worried or upset about being left with them.

KEY POINT

Ask to see the original DBS certificate, check it covers the child workforce, and combine it with references, a trial session and your own judgement.

Working with children or vulnerable adults?

Point them to **self-employed-dbs.co.uk**. Eligible self-employed workers can apply online in around ten minutes and get their Enhanced DBS check processed by a registered Umbrella Body.

self-employed-dbs.co.uk

This guide is general information based on DBS and GOV.UK guidance published September 2026. It is not legal advice. Always check the latest guidance at gov.uk. DBS for Self-Employed is a brand of MJD Ventures Limited.